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OIT 1081-86
02 JAN 1987

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Administration

FROM: Edward J. Maloney
Director of Information Technology

SUBJECT: ADP Support to DA Offices

50-1

Summary

1. This memorandum proposes a realignment of Directorate resources that will place ADP specialists from OIT under the direct management of DA customer offices. I believe such action will improve significantly the quality of ADP support to the Directorate. This decentralization is in line with trends in industry, where corporate customers manage the ADP systems development and support for their own activities under the technical guidance and standards of the central Management Information Systems organization.

Background

2. It is hardly news that the DA is dependent on ADP systems. Systems such as FRS, GAS, CONIF, etc. are the lifeblood of the Directorate and, in turn, of other Agency managers. Historically, the people whose job it is to manage these and other important information processing tools have not had direct and frequent contact with the people who depend on these tools. According to studies published by Gartner Group and other industry observers, such overcentralization of MIS resources increasingly is being recognized as inappropriate in both the private sector and government.

3. This tendency has led customer components to fill gaps in important MIS requirements by acquiring their own ADP personnel. The attachment provides estimates of total DA resources applied to DA ADP support. In the aggregate, there are over 200 staff and 50 contractor personnel supporting the Directorate. These ADP specialists are involved in development, maintenance, enhancement, and production support (batch systems). They are split between OIT and other DA offices. There is very little logic behind the split of resources; the inevitable result of an ad hoc process which has evolved over the years.

4. Functionally similar ADP activities are performed by OIT in support of its DA customers and by the DA customers themselves. Frequently these activities are poorly coordinated and unplanned. Certainly, no Directorate-wide or joint planning takes place. In fact, I am not aware of a single office ADP plan and definitely not one that spans both OIT and a

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customer office. The result of this lack of coordination is a loss of focus, a difficulty for you, the DDA, in asserting your priorities. The bottom line is lost opportunities. The DA must apply technology to the solution of pressing Agency problems. The existing confused organizational situation frustrates that important goal.

5. While we in the Directorate have sometimes worked at cross-purposes on ADP support, the demand for ADP services has continued to expand. Legislative and operational requirements change at an ever-increasing rate. This, in turn, generates a nearly insatiable workload for maintenance and enhancement of existing systems. Simultaneously, while OIT and its DA customers are taking steps to upgrade existing systems, the next generation of ADP systems is under development. OIT's approach to the latter task has been the Corporate Data Program, an effort to consolidate and integrate the Agency's administrative data. The major tasks of development of a new data environment and the maintenance and enhancement of current systems have led to a situation where our DA customers are frustrated by our lack of progress on their problems. In short, ADP organization in the Directorate needs to be rationalized if we are to develop, maintain, and support systems that meet Directorate goals and customer requirements. This memorandum proposes an approach, for your consideration, that will position the Directorate for the 1990s.

The Proposal

6. What we are proposing is the decentralization of existing OIT support and development resources to the DA offices with two critical program exceptions: the Corporate Data effort and DA systems development and support for both the foreign and domestic fields. Our decentralization proposal puts under customer control MZ careerists and contractors currently performing the following functions: maintenance and enhancement of existing DA systems; development of non-corporate Headquarters systems; and production services for DA systems (i.e., batch systems administration). This team would be under local office management for everything but the careers of the OIT assignees.

7. The reassigned OIT personnel would form the nucleus of an ADP component of the DA office. This component would include OIT development and production specialists currently in MISG/OIT and GOG/OIT respectively, OIT rotationals currently assigned to the customer office, and customer ADP specialists. The manager of the team would be an OIT careerist. This will ensure a strong linkage between OIT and the DA customer office. The decentralized team approach will permit DA offices to directly manage the resources committed to the support of their information systems. The first charge of the MZ manager would be the development of a component ADP strategic plan. OIT, in turn, would have the responsibility to coordinate the component plans and to prepare an overall Directorate plan.

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8. At the same time, OIT would have as its charter management of the Corporate Data Program and DA foreign and domestic field development and support activities. These programs must be managed centrally if they are to succeed. Corporate data must be administered by a central group to avoid incompatibility and redundancy. Similarly, the complexity and constraints of the field environment require a single program manager if our efforts are to be effective. With respect to career development and as a long-term goal, I also recommend you consider incorporation of all DA ADP specialist personnel into the MZ Career Service. This will provide them with the career paths and opportunities necessary for their development and retention.

The Benefits

9. Under this proposal, Directorate-level goal setting for information systems would be simplified. The crisper organizational structure would improve implementation of both Directorate and component plans. DA offices would have more immediate control of the resources supporting their systems. They would determine local priorities and approaches. ADP specialists would be closer to the customer and would, I believe, have a better understanding of requirements. In order to facilitate a fully coordinated Directorate-wide ADP program, OIT will provide technical guidance, standards, and training, as well as acting as the focal point for Directorate planning. These activities will ensure that the Directorate systems are developed in a uniform manner and play together to the extent necessary. Retention of MZ Career Service status will permit full career development possibilities for OIT staffers assigned to a DA customer office. MZers would receive the typical benefits of the rotational program. They would be "closer to the action" and develop a better understanding of customer problems as well as the external focus essential to a service organization. This rotational experience will enrich their Agency careers and serve as an excellent preparation for future assignments.

The Risks

10. We recognize that this is a bold initiative, but we judge the risks to be small. Customer support can only improve with dedicated resources under local control. There will be some additional costs, as the efficiencies of sharing centralized ADP personnel will be traded for more effective support to DA offices. Other types of resource sharing may, however, be facilitated in this new environment. For example, production specialists may assume more of the system maintenance burden than is possible under the existing organizational framework. We propose to implement a proactive standards and coordination program to ensure that existing and enhanced DA systems continue to fit together harmoniously. Furthermore, Corporate Data Program planning will be enhanced to ensure a smooth transition between existing systems and

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future systems. We will also begin an aggressive program, working closely with DA offices, to define an architecture and begin implementation of an integrated DA ADP systems environment in both the foreign and domestic fields.

The Implementation

11. If this proposal is accepted, we will work with DA customer offices to develop specifics on the transfer of resources. OIT will transfer a negotiated number of staff and contractor resources currently targeted on DA systems (see attachment). The staff positions transferred to components will be designated as MZ positions. OIT will commit to keeping these positions filled with fully-qualified personnel. The remainder of the DA-targeted OIT resources will be applied to the Corporate Data Program and foreign and domestic field systems development and support efforts. Appropriate OIT team leaders will be selected (with the concurrence of the recipient office). Ultimately, we would like to see the full component team (OITers augmented by customer personnel and contractors) housed on customer space contiguous to the majority of the component. The formation of the team and the transfer should take less than three months from the go-ahead (space will obviously be a problem).

Conclusion

12. I am excited about this program. Decentralizing development resources in the DA will be an important achievement. Directorate-wide ADP planning and resource allocation will be significantly improved. Corporate priorities will be more controlling in this new, more streamlined organizational structure. Decentralization will give DA customers more of the management control of resources that they have always wanted. I expect to see immediate improvement in customer satisfaction. The decentralized support concept is not a panacea, but I believe it will go a long way toward meeting the often-expressed concerns of our DA customers. Concomitantly, OIT management will be able to focus on the future, Corporate Data and the foreign and domestic field environments. I look forward to hearing your comments and those of my fellow Office Directors on this proposal.

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Edward J. Maloney

Attachment:
As Stated

cc: DA Office Directors

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